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Global sidecar challenge to raise awareness of modern slavery

FRIENDS REV UP FOR ADVENTURE

Hannah Somerville
hsomerville@nqo.com

TWO childhood friends in Banbury are calling for help from the public in 2017 to fund a hair-brained adventure with humanity at its heart.

Matt Bishop, 25, and Reece Gilkes, 24, plan to attempt the first global circumnavigation on the most inappropriate form of transport imaginable – a scooter with a sidecar.

The madcap trip will raise vital awareness of modern slavery, which affects 45.8m people worldwide, as well as funds for the charities fighting to end it.

Following a recent UK-wide tour, the pair are looking to raise an initial £10,000 for the initiative, called As Seen from the Sidecar.

Mr Gilkes, who grew up in Hanwell Fields, said: "We felt there was a growing disconnect between everyone from all different countries.

"So we decided to embark on a mission that would tell the stories of those who you may not meet in day-to-day life."

Mr Bishop, of Sibford Ferris, said: "The idea was to cross as many borders as possible in as ridiculous a way as possible.

"We picked a charity doing a project that transcends all borders. Not many people realise modern day slavery exists to the extent that it does, or in their own country."

The expedition is likely to launch in late 2017 and will take up to 18 months, travelling on a mixture of tarmac, mud, gravel, ice and sand, with temperatures potentially reaching highs of 50C and lows of -30C.

Mr Bishop added: "The first challenge will be the weather changes. We are dealing with an 80-degree change and the scooter is basically a tin can.

"The other obstacle is paperwork and visas, and getting the scooter into different places. In China especially, it's almost impossible to drive.

"Because it's going to be 18 months, we don't know where we are going to be travelling. Geopolitical changes might mean we have to go through different routes."

Mr Gilkes added: "From what we've researched, it appears Nepal will be incredibly complex and the roads are extremely difficult.

Matt Bishop and Reece Gilkes on their recent tour of the UK to promote their charity challenge, As Seen from a Sidecar

"Ultimately, though, I'm excited about putting our theory to the test and meeting those people who will define if the goals of our trip are successful."

Along the way Mr Bishop and Mr Gilkes, who work in the travel and charity sectors, will meet representatives from charities and organisations working to tackle modern slavery.

Victims of slavery include those subject to forced labour, including children, those in domestic settings, people in forced marriages and trafficked workers.

All funds raised by sponsorship of the trip will go to Walk Free, an umbrella organisation unifying the global fight against modern slavery.

In December, Mr Bishop and Mr Gilkes tested their mettle on a 'ridiculous' UK tour on 125cc motorbikes, from London to John O'Groats via Land's End, raising awareness of the main event and and stopping off at their old secondary school, The Warriner School in Bloxham, on the way. Mr Bishop said: "We did 2,200 miles, and gave some talks to spread the message about the big trip – that this is a serious thing that is actually happening."

The adventure will be recorded via a blog and a series of YouTube videos.

■ **For more information or to donate to As Seen from the Sidecar, visit asseenfromthesidecar.org**

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Starter homes plan is on the cards for derelict pub

The derelict Admiral Holland pub; below, Mark Cherry

Demolition team is given the go-ahead to get site ready for development

Hannah Somerville
hsomerville@nqo.com

A PUB in the heart of Banbury that has been empty for more than 12 months is finally set to be demolished.

The Admiral Holland, which was built in 1960, closed its doors in December 2015 and gas was disconnected in July 2016 to deter squatters and prevent a safety risk.

Since then daily security patrols have been carried out after Thames Valley Police received reports of drug dealing at the site.

But Cherwell District Council has now granted planning permission for its Build team to move on to the premises in preparation for a new development.

It is likely to be converted into starter homes for local first-time buyers as part of a revitalisation and expansion of the neighbouring Bretch Hill estate.

Banbury town councillor Mark Cherry, who used the pub himself from the age of 18, said he knew residents were 'disappointed' by the pub's fate.

He said: "As a local councillor I was powerless to stop what happened. It's what's happening to pubs across Oxfordshire and across the UK.

"Unfortunately pubs that don't serve food are few and far between now. We've just got to make the best of it and fight for the social and affordable housing we need in Banbury."

The pub is named after Vice Admiral Lancelot Ernest Holland, who was born in Middleton Cheney in 1887 and served in the Royal Navy for 38 years, dying on board the HMS Hood in 1941 at the height of the Second World War.

In October this year the sign that formerly hung outside the pub in Woodgreen Avenue was 'rescued' by Mr Cherry in conjunction with a local firefighter.

It was donated to the national HMS Hood Association to keep the pub's memory alive.

Mr Cherry added that if new homes were indeed built on the site the road could be renamed.

He said: "I've mentioned it could be named 'Admiral Way' because once the pub is demolished, anybody coming in won't know there was a pub there."

Nightclub attack

A 20-YEAR-old woman lost her tooth after being assaulted in a nightclub.

It happened after an argument broke out on the dance floor at MooMoo nightclub in High Street, Banbury, on Thursday.

The woman had a drink spilt on her which she believed was accidental, but her male friend then became involved in an argument with another woman he thought was responsible.

She was then assaulted and fell to the floor. She lost a tooth and sustained cuts to her mouth in the attack which required hospital treatment.

Police said the attacker is a white woman, with blonde hair and an eyebrow piercing.

Man hit in face

A MAN was attacked in a Banbury alleyway on Christmas Day.

Two men hit the 38-year-old in the face at about 8.30pm near Queens Road, inflicting injuries that required hospital treatment.

Police said one attacker was white, in his 20s and wearing a dark hoodie. The other had a scarf around his mouth.

Anyone with information can call 101 and quote crime number 43160361590.

Free car parking

SHOPPERS will be able to park for free for a whole month in Banbury from this weekend.

All Cherwell District Council-operated car parks will offer free parking every day after 3pm.

The council hopes the initiative will bring more people into the town centre.

The scheme will run from Sunday to January 31.

All participating car parks will be clearly signposted. For more details see cherwell.gov.uk/carparks

Search for shopping centre attackers

THUGS charged at a man in a shopping centre and shoved him into glass doors with such force that they shattered.

A 21-year-old man was punched in the face by two men before they chased him through Castle Quay shopping centre in Banbury, and pushed him through glass panes at the other end.

Thames Valley Police released CCTV images, pictured, of two men they would like to speak to in relation to the assault and criminal damage, which took place at about 4.45pm on November 2. The force said the identity of the men was currently unknown, suggesting the victim did not know his attackers.

Investigating officer PC Craig Ridgley, based at Banbury Police Station, said: "This incident took place in a busy shopping area in town and the commotion of the breaking glass doors will certainly have attracted attention."

He said anyone who recognised the men may have vital information. Call police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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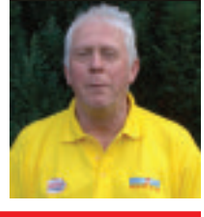

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Go dry for charity call to staff

STAFF at Oxfordshire County Council are being encouraged to take part in 'Dry January' and abstain from alcohol throughout this month.

Teams and individuals across the organisation have pledged to take part in the annual campaign run by Alcohol Concern, a charity working to reduce the problems caused by alcohol.

In December, Alcohol Concern representatives visited County Hall as well as Samuelson House in Banbury to motivate participants and give tips.

Carole Stow, the council's marketing and consultation manager, said: "I'm taking part because I simply didn't realise that a few glasses of wine a couple of times a week takes me above the recommended weekly allowance.

"I know taking part will definitely save me a bit of cash and I'm looking forward to finding out if I notice some of the other benefits like getting a better night's sleep and feeling more energised."

Government guidelines advise consuming no more than 14 units of alcohol per week.

Regularly drinking more can contribute to serious health conditions including liver and heart disease, and cancers of the mouth, throat and breast.

Cabinet member for public health Hilary Hibbert-Biles said: "Dry January isn't about trying to convince people to give up drinking for good, it's about trying to make people reassess their relationship with alcohol."

To sign up for Dry January or download the app visit alcoholconcern.org.uk/dry-january

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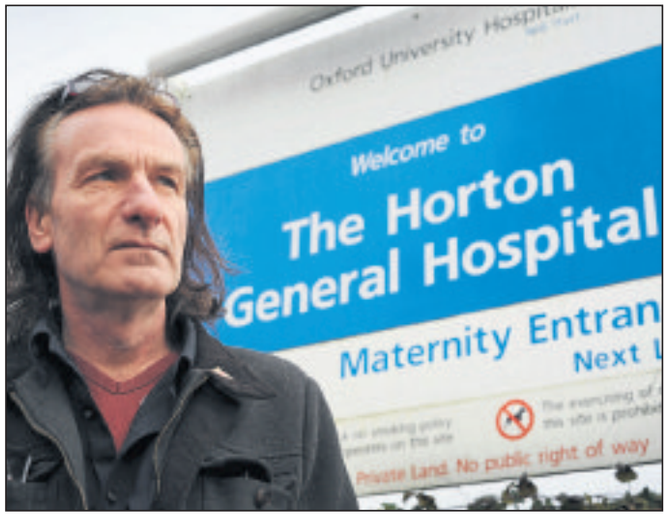

Keith Strangwood, chairman of the Keep Out Horton General Campaign Group

Failure to recruit docs a 'disgrace'

Pressure group says hospital is not trying hard enough to get new staff at maternity unit

Hannah Somerville
hsomerville@nqo.com

A HEALTH trust's failure to recruit enough doctors for a downgraded maternity unit has been branded a disgrace by campaigners.

Bosses have said the temporary downgrade of the Horton General Hospital's maternity unit is likely to remain in place beyond March 5 because they are struggling to recruit enough doctors.

But Keith Strangwood, chairman of the Keep the Horton General Campaign Group (KTHG), said Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was not trying hard enough.

The Banbury resident said: "If you had a shortage of doctors at the John Radcliffe, they would be found in a few days. It is double standards.

"They have got no will to employ staff. They could approach an agency and in 14 days they could recruit enough staff."

The maternity unit was changed from doctor-led to midwife-led in October after the trust said it did not have enough doctors.

Despite 48 applicants coming forward for seven adverts throughout the year, the trust said 10 were offered a job and only one so far had taken up the position. Three doctors are already in post and another two are due to start next year but it is still not enough.

A spokesman for the trust said: "The service was initially temporarily suspended with effect from October 3, 2016, with the hope that if enough doctors were able to be appointed in the meantime, that the service could reopen in January.

"This decision was reviewed at the end of October, and it was clear that there would only be three doctors in post in January out of the nine needed.

"That situation was reviewed again this week and unfortunately, the current number of obstetric doctors remains at three and the maximum number of doctors likely to be in post by March is five, which is not enough to reinstate the service at that point."

The trust maintains recruitment efforts are 'ongoing' and said there had been difficulties finding suitable applicants due to a national shortage of suitably qualified doctors.

It also said there were problems after job offers were made and applicants either took job offers elsewhere or failed to meet clinical standards or English language tests, with some candidates withdrawing from the process.

North Oxfordshire MP Victoria Prentis said: "While I understand that some appointments have been made it is extremely disappointing there will not be sufficient doctors in post in time for the obstetric unit to reopen in March. I will continue to assist the trust to ensure normal service will resume."

Tax rise call to fund care slammed

THE Labour leader on Cherwell District Council has slammed the suggestion of increases in council tax as a solution to funding issues in social care.

Last week it was revealed that government ministers are considering allowing local authorities to raise council tax higher than the two per cent currently permitted.

It comes as reports warned of an unfolding 'crisis' in social care due to short-staffing, the closure of care homes and an estimated £2.6bn gap in funding as nationally spending has decreased by nine per cent in five years.

Sean Woodcock, of the Banbury & Bicester Labour Party, said that to make council tax payers foot the bill was government 'completely ducking its responsibilities'.

He added: "Our social care system is in a complete mess. Councils have and are continuing to cut services as their funding from Whitehall is slashed.

"This is then having a knock-on effect on our NHS where the axe is being taken to services there.

"What is actually needed is a radical rethink of how our care system operates and a proper debate on how to plug the funding gap. This may mean a total overhaul of the care system nationally as well as a brutally frank discussion with the public."

Horse in tight squeeze is rescued from muddy ditch

A FORMER racehorse, named Tight Squeeze, had to be rescued after falling into a muddy ditch and becoming stuck.

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service was called on Saturday at 10.20am to the incident near Wiggington Road, South Newington.

The 18-year old horse had slipped into a ditch and become stranded some hours earlier.

Fire crews from Banbury and Hook Norton stations and an animal rescue team from Kidlington station were called in and found the rae horse in a muddy, swamp-like ditch, suffering from extreme fatigue and cold.

Rescue teams used slings and harnesses to secure Tight Squeeze before dragging her out of the ditch to safety.

In all, the operation involved 15 firefighters.

Station manager Brian Butler, who attended the incident, said: "Tight Squeeze is an extremely courageous old lady who will be celebrating 2017 like the rest of us.

"The crews worked extremely hard and professionally to conclude what was a complex and dramatic rescue."

Firefighters rescuing the horse

Boys sought after flattening garden fence

TWO boys who knocked over a garden fence to jump on a trampoline are being sought by police.

The pair, who are described as white and aged between 15 and 20, pushed and kicked a fence in Jubilee Park, Bloxham, until it was flattened.

After breaking the fence, the two went into the garden and started jumping on a trampoline.

The incident occurred on Sunday, December 4, but police only launched their appeal this week.

Investigating officer PC Richard Miller, based at Banbury police station, said: "This was a distressing incident for the victim and we appeal to anyone who witnessed this incident to come forward with any information they might have."

Biologist back from year on remote isle

Scientist Jamie Coleman; below, an Antarctic fur seal bull and macaroni penguins

A pint of ale and TV footie for man who lived on island with seals, penguins and seabirds

Matt Oliver
moliver@nqo.com

AFTER spending more than a year with seals and penguins in the sub-Antarctic, an Oxfordshire scientist celebrated New Year with friends and family in his home village.

Jamie Coleman, a higher predator biologist with the British Antarctic Survey, spent 14 months on the island of South Georgia in the South Atlantic, flying home to enjoy the festive season with his family in Islip – with salad, a pint of ale and football on TV.

Sitting 860 miles south east of the Falkland Islands, South Georgia is home to millions of penguins, seals and seabirds.

The 27-year-old, who studied marine biology at Newcastle University, and lived in Fewcott, near Bicester, before jetting off to the south Atlantic, said he was first inspired to go to the island when he watched Sir David Attenborough on the BBC's *Frozen Planet*.

He said: "This year has been absolutely life-changing. I have ticked so many things off my bucket list whilst living in the true wilderness.

"I have fallen in love with South Georgia and anyone that visits will immediately see why.

"I returned home for Christmas and although I miss the seals and penguins, I have been extremely excited to see my friends and family, drink a pint of draught beer and watch *Match Of The Day* for the first time in 14 months.

"One of the things I was most excited to come back for was salad and fruit. You get some potatoes there but, on the whole, no fresh produce."

He added: "It has been really nice to be back. It's the first time I met my nephew William, born while I was away, and it was exciting to meet my niece Ella, who is now three."

He isn't back for long, however.

Later this month he flies back to the island to work as a tour guide for visitors to the island, with National Geographic.

He said: "I really enjoyed it and definitely want to do more with the British Antarctic Survey too."

During his time on the island, Mr Coleman photographed the wildlife. He added: "Photography is a hobby that I have developed as a result of my love for wildlife. I spend so long working immersed in such amazing wildlife that it would be stupid not to take photos.

"South Georgia boasts enormous densities of penguins, seals, seabirds and whales, so there were unique photographic opportunities on a daily basis.

"One thing you do miss when your are out there, though, is the sound of birdsong in the morning."

Swashbuckling thrill beckons

BANBURY residents are invited to join a swashbuckling adventure on the high seas this week with Cherwell Theatre Company.

***Treasure Island: The Panto* is being performed in the Town Hall from tomorrow until Sunday, January 15, featuring local actors with a string of West End credits and Edinburgh Fringe five-star reviews. Tickets cost £10 for adults and £8 for concessions.**

Information website Banburyshire Info will today be giving four lucky people in the area tickets for free after a competition was run on Facebook and Twitter.

Fire crews hit times targets

OXFORDSHIRE Fire Service beat all its targets for average response times over the course of the past 12 months, according to an annual report to go before the county council this week.

In 2015/16, officers attended 5,997 incidents in the county including fires, road traffic collisions, animal rescues and water rescues including 828 medical emergencies.

The service aimed to arrive at 80 per cent of emergencies in 11 minutes or less, and 95 per cent of emergencies in 14 minutes or less. It met both targets at 88.6 per cent and 96.3 per cent respectively.

A foreword to the report, written by Rodney Rose, cabinet member for the fire and rescue service, and outgoing chief fire officer David Etheridge OBE, stated: "We are very proud of our achievements during the past year.

"We want to thank all our staff who have contributed towards our achievements this year. We will continue to deliver a high-performing service to the people of Oxfordshire and are firmly committed to achieving excellence and further improving public and firefighter safety."

The final spend for the entire service last year was £2.7m, meaning the cost of providing the fire and rescue service was £38.62 per year for each person in Oxfordshire and an average of £5,106 for each incident.

However, the service missed its target for the length of time taken to answer 999 calls. It aimed to have an administrator pick up a call within 15 seconds in 100 per cent of cases, but only managed 81.74.

The full report is to be discussed by Oxfordshire County Council's performance scrutiny committee today, from 10am in County Hall.

New rail services between Oxford station and London Marylebone were opened earlier this month; below, Jeremy Long

Transport experts' help should boost progress

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's chairman Jeremy Long tells MATT OLIVER about its priorities

AS OXFORDSHIRE faces up to its chronic transport problems, experts in the field are busy working to come up with a clear plan for the future to keep the county moving.

There are currently plans for a new "expressway" road to Cambridge, upgrades to the A34 and a new East West Rail line.

All these are being driven by hopes of creating "Britain's Silicon Valley" with Cambridge and Milton Keynes, but a report by the National Infrastructure Commission earlier this year warned it will all require strong regional leadership.

One of those people hoping to guide the process is Jeremy Long, the chairman of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP).

Mr Long joined the quango – one of 39 set up across the UK to give businesses a greater say on local decision-making – in March.

But the Exeter College graduate brings to the role significant knowledge as the current Europe chief executive of MTR Corporation, the company originally set up to build Hong Kong's mass transit rail system and the future operator of Crossrail in London.

He said: "I have been involved across a number of sectors throughout my career, but I have always been involved in businesses where perhaps the biggest thing that needed doing was improving the staff culture, to improve it from within-out.

"You can't always get customer service right but even when you don't it is about how hard you work to put things right.

"The LEP has quite a representation across sectors and it is that knowledge and interaction where we can add most value to local thinking, including coming up with a clear strategy."

This is the aim of the strategic economic plan for Oxfordshire, he says, which was refreshed recently.

The document is prone to jargon – such as dubbing Bicester, Oxford and Didcot the "knowledge spine" – and countryside campaigners have branded it an "aggressive growth strategy" for housing.

But it is credited by many officials for at last putting on paper a coherent plan for the county. Mr Long added: "It is about setting out everything we are trying to get to."

Since being created in 2011, the LEP has become the main body through which government money is awarded for infrastructure and business schemes. This included the "City Deal" for Oxford, which provided funding for schemes such as the Harwell link road now being built and the ongoing Access to Headington works.

And Mr Long says there is much to be positive about when looking to the future, thanks to the Government's renewed interest in the Oxford-Cambridge corridor.

He is particularly enthusiastic about the work of the National Infrastructure Commission, led by former Oxford city councillor Lord Adonis, which called on Chancellor Philip Hammond to plough millions of pounds into new transport links and housing.

The recommendations led to investment of £27m on work to design the new Oxford-Cambridge Expressway road and £110m for the East West Rail route between Bicester and Bedford.

Mr Long hopes it could be just the beginning. "It was absolutely right to set the commission up because there is a need to plan long-term and it's important that extends well beyond political terms. Since they were asked to look at the Oxford-Cambridge corridor, we have seen them in action and they have grasped the issues very well.

"Housing and transport are inextricably linked and so you have to do the two together. You can't talk about one without talking about the other."

He is also supportive of controversial calls to involve the private sector in the construction of the East West Rail route, an idea suggested by Transport Secretary Chris Grayling last month.

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Call for all officers to get a Taser

PC Kevin Ellis aims a Taser; below, Graham Smith

All frontline police should be offered stun gun – federation boss

Michael Race
mrace@nqo.com

TASERS should be rolled out to every frontline police officer who wants to carry one, the Thames Valley Police Federation has said.

Chairman Graham Smith called for the stun gun to be available to all officers across the region to allow officers to better protect the public.

Mr Smith said the need for Tasers was because of the 'reality' that bobbies faced 'more violence' on the beat and said the force should 'dig deep' and issue the weapons.

His comments came as the Police Federation of England and Wales released results of a public poll which showed 71 per cent of the 2,004 members of the public backed officers carrying a Taser.

Mr Smith said he did not think Thames Valley Police chiefs would issue Tasers to all officers in the 'short-term' because it was a 'cost issue', but said he thought it would be a gradual change over the next few years.

He said: "We live in a very different world to the one where I started out as a police officer 30 years ago.

"The reality is we face more violence. Police officers have to want to carry a Taser.

"I just think it's necessary to provide it for them to provide protection to the public.

"The public are not averse to police officers carrying firearms, it's more politicians."

The handheld weapons, which are designed to temporarily incapacitate suspects through the use of an electrical current, have been fired by police officers in Oxford more times than anywhere else in the Thames Valley over the past four years.

Between 2012 and March this year, officers in Oxford fired the stun gun 24 times, topping Slough with 18 and Milton Keynes with 17.

Oxford city also registered the highest rates for drawing and aiming, but not firing, Tasers in the force area over that period – with the weapons being deployed 146 times, above Slough (139) and Milton Keynes (134).

The Ipsos MORI survey showed 80 per cent of people believed it would make no difference to their decision to approach an officer for assistance even if that officer was carrying a Taser.

Mr Smith said there needed to be a 'grown-up conversation' with politicians and the public about whether the police should carry firearms.

He said that in the possibility of a terrorist attack, it was likely the first police officer on the scene would be an unarmed reactive officer, who wouldn't be able to 'deter or engage' with the offenders.

Thames Valley Police did not say whether they planned to give all officers Tasers, but said their core response patrol officers already carried the stun gun.

Spokesman Hannah Jones said officers only used Tasers when faced with a significant level of violence and said officers needed to be qualified to use them.

Fire crews stop garage blaze spreading to house

HOMEOWNERS returned from an evening out to find their house on fire last Thursday.

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service said it was called just before 10pm after vigilant neighbours saw the blaze in Hill Farm Lane, Duns Tew.

The fire had started in a garage and was spreading towards the main house, but crews managed to contain it.

Fire service spokesman David Bray said: "The swift actions of the first attending crews, wearing breathing apparatus and using high pressure hose lines, enabled them to contain the fire to the garage area. As a result of this, only moderate fire and smoke damage was sustained to the remaining property."

Fire crews from Deddington, Banbury, Charlbury and Woodstock attended with the incident support unit from Eynsham.

South Central Ambulance Service and police also attended.

The cause of the fire has not yet been confirmed, but is thought to have been accidental.

Mr Bray added: "An investigation is currently ongoing by specialist officers.

"The property had hard-wired smoke detection throughout, which alerted the neighbours to the fire."

Firefighters at the scene

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Robot eye op breakthrough

Device used to operate on wide awake patient is hailed a resounding success

Hannah Somerville
hsomerville@nqo.com

A VISION of the future of eye surgery was hailed in September as an associate priest from Oxford underwent the world's first robotic eye operation.

Now a consultants and Oxford University scientists are celebrating the second milestone in the landmark clinical trial – using the same device on a patient who was awake.

On the evening of December 23, in front of an assembled team of surgeons and backup engineers, ophthalmologist Professor Robert MacLaren used a remotely-controlled robot developed by Dutch firm Preceyes to inject the blood-dissolving agent tPA under the retina of a female patient who had suffered a haemorrhage.

It took about an hour to set up equipment but just 37 minutes to complete the operation, hailed as a resounding success. Prof MacLaren said: "It was the first time we have actually used it with a patient who was awake and just had a local anaesthetic.

"It has a very precise movement and if someone is moving around it's going to negate any benefit. But it follows the eye very well."

The robot, the only one of its kind, acts as a mechanical hand with seven computer-controlled motors, resulting in movements as precise as 1,000th of

a millimetre in scale. It can be used where unwanted tremors in the surgeon's hand – such as through their pulse – could pose a risk to the operation.

Prof MacLaren, a professor of ophthalmology at Oxford University and consultant at the Oxford Eye Hospital, said: "In eye surgery we are still dependent on the human hand. Every surgeon has a bad day.

"Suddenly we have a device that can potentially do incredible things that human hands can't. We use the system to stabilise everything."

It was first deployed in September to lift a membrane a 100th of a millimetre thick from patient's retina, a procedure carried out five times more since then before the team moved to the second phase, operating under the retina.

As well as a robotic arm the device has an iPad-like touchscreen and joystick, and a huge machine behind the operator with cooling fans and servers to control the motors.

In an operating room, Prof MacLaren said, any electronics have to be carefully regulated so the oxygen gas used during surgery does not create sparks.

But he added that despite the technology being largely untested, patients were less hesitant to sign up for the trial than might be expected.

He said: "Because people have heard about the developments in Oxford I've had letters from patients asking if they can have the operation, and they don't even live locally.

"We are doing a clinical trial. They are always a bit risky. But in my experience so far this has been very successful and pretty safe.

"It's not like going into an operating theatre where C-3PO is sitting there and R2-D2 is running around with the pieces. The robot is making us more precise and giving us more power to operate in a controlled way. If it's malfunctioning, we can stop. Ultimately we are in control."

The trial is being funded by the NIHR Oxford Biomedical Research Centre, a collaboration between the University and Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to fund research often based within the city's hospital sites.

In the future the robot could be used to deliver gene therapy and stem cells to treat currently incurable diseases, and types of progressive blindness.

Prof MacLaren said it was hard to be certain when 'stage three' could begin, but it could be late 2017.

Professor Robert MacLaren, inset, with the Preceyes robot at the John Radcliffe Hospital

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Where good old fashioned service comes as standard

Firm backs dog charity

A CHARITY providing special assistance dogs for people with disabilities and autism is to receive an extra annual boost to train up puppies.

Dogs for Good, which is based in Blacklocks Hill, Banbury is from now on to receive £5,000 a year from Reading-based IT company Ultima.

The firm will also be offering IT expertise free of charge to Dogs for Good and employees will take on their own fundraising activities to support the charity.

Scores of families a year are changed forever with the arrival of a pet from the charity, which can offer practical support as well as confidence, independence and a friend.

Scott Dodds, the CEO of Ultima, said: "We are proud to be sponsoring Dogs for Good. We chose them as our charity partner as we have many values in common. They work closely with individuals to match the right dog to each client's needs and are always evaluating how to improve their services.

"We will be working with them to ensure their IT is meeting the charity's needs now and in the future. Our employees will also be donating their time for this project."

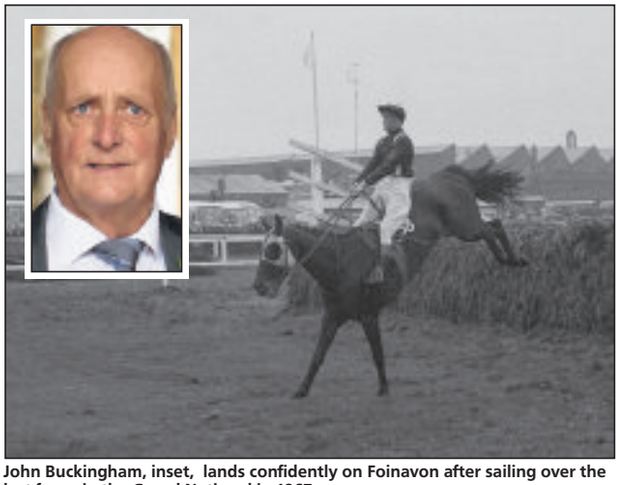
The £5,000 will go towards sponsoring a puppy at Dogs for Good and staff have already held their first 'name the puppy' competition.

Staff are also planning to take part in both marathons and triathlons in the coming year to raise funds for Dogs for Good, as well as volunteering days.

Jockey's unlikely win made history in the Grand National

Tributes to the man who rode 100-1 Foinavon to victory at Aintree course

Andy Ffrench
affrench@nqo.com



John Buckingham, inset, lands confidently on Foinavon after sailing over the last fence in the Grand National in 1967

JOHN Buckingham, who steered 100-1 shot Foinavon to a sensational victory in the 1967 Grand National, has died at the age of 76.

Foinavon was the only horse to escape the melee at the 23rd fence caused by a loose horse, Popham Down.

Almost the entire field at Aintree was either brought down or badly hampered, but not Foinavon.

By the time the horse and rider reached the obstacle, which now bears his name, there was a big enough gap for Mr Buckingham to steer his mount through. Seizing the opportunity of a lifetime, the jockey and Foinavon negotiated the remaining fences without mishap and kept on to win the world's greatest steeplechase by 15 lengths.

It was Mr Buckingham's first ride in the race and neither owner Cyril Watkins nor trainer John Kempton were there to witness the unlikeliest of victories.

John Buckingham was born on July 10, 1940, at Five Ways, Hatton, near Warwick to Nancy Bewley and Thomas Buckingham. He had a sister Ann, and two brothers, Tom and Ray. Ray is now 74 and still lives near Warwick. Mr Buckingham went to school in Rowington near Warwick and at Woodford Halse, Daventry, before beginning his apprenticeship aged 15 with Oxfordshire trainer Edward Courage.

He got his first National Hunt ride aged 16 on Royal Oak at Stratford in 1957 and two years later at Southwell he rode his first winner on Sahagun and went on to name his family home after the horse.

Mr Buckingham met office worker Ann Chater at a dance in 1964 and they married on September 10, 1966, at St John's Church, Leamington Spa, before moving to Chipping Warden near Banbury where they remained until his death. The couple's eldest daughter, Laura, now 46, was born on October 21, 1970, while their youngest daughter Lucy, now 39, was born on December 12, 1977.

Mr Buckingham retired in 1971 as a jockey and became a jockey's valet. He built up the business with his brother Tom over 30 years and sold it to fellow ex-jockey Chris Maude following Tom's death in 2001.

During his retirement Mr Buckingham also enjoyed playing golf and bowls.

Mr Maude recalled a story Mr Buckingham told him about the first time a fledgling Tony McCoy needed a valet's services in England. He said: "When AP had his first ride in England, he didn't have any gear. John leant him a pair of boots and said: 'You'll have to go some to fill these, young man' – they were Peter Scudamore's – the rest, as they say, is history."

Mr Buckingham died from pneumonia after suffering a lung condition. Following a family funeral at Banbury Crematorium, a celebration of Mr Buckingham's life will be held at St Peter and St Paul Church, Chipping Warden, tomorrow at 12.30pm. Mr Buckingham leaves wife Ann, daughters Laura and Lucy and four grandchildren.

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Game spin-off is mystifying

ASSASSIN'S CREED **(12A, 115 mins) Action/Adventure/ Fantasy. Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard, Jeremy Irons, Charlotte Rampling. Director: Justin Kurzel**

BASED on a video game series, *Assassin's Creed* is a dour time-travelling fantasy that swiftly somersaults into absurdity and incomprehension.

We share the bewilderment of the lead character when he mumbles: "What the hell is going on?"

If the three screenwriters have the answer, they don't let on for almost two hours of special effects-laden hack and slash, that ebbs and flows between present day Madrid and 1492 Andalucia.

Director Justin Kurzel, who recently helmed attractive leads Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard in his tour-de-force re-imaging of *Macbeth*, is powerless to make sense of the digitally augmented muddle.

Battle sequences and protracted chases on foot, including daredevil leaps captured in slow motion, are stylishly staged to the relentless drum beat of composer Jed Kurzel's score.

For fans of interactive media, it's as grim and bloody as the 12A certificate will allow.

Unfortunately, like so many adaptations of video games, the film lacks the vicarious thrill of physically controlling a character and assuming personal responsibility for their fate.

Voyeurism has rarely been so tiresome.

A few hours after he is executed by lethal injection, Callum Lynch (Fassbender) wakes in a facility owned by biotechnology company Abstergo Industries, a front for the power-hungry Templar Order under the control of president Ellen Kaye (Charlotte Rampling).

The convicted criminal learns he is the last in a long bloodline of valiant protectors – the Assassins – who have been at war with the Templars.

The company's Machiavellian CEO, Alan Rikkin (Jeremy Irons), is searching for an ancient artefact called the Apple of Eden, which was hidden by Callum's 15th-century Spanish relative, Aguilar de Nerha.

Using a device called the Animus, Rikkin and his scientist daughter Sofia (Cotillard) access genetic memories concealed in Callum's DNA to locate the missing artefact.

"What you're about to see, hear and feel are the memories of your ancestor who's been dead for 500 years," whispers Sofia.

Vivid snapshots of the past flash before Callum's eyes and he relives each punch and stab as if he were Aguilar, fighting alongside fellow Assassin Maria (Ariane Labed).

Ricocheting back and forth in time, Callum realises he holds the power to his blood-spattered destiny.

Assassin's Creed employs earthy and metallic colour palettes to create an immediate visual distinction between the two timeframes.

Fassbender, credited as one of the film's producers, and Cotillard could deliver their lines in their sleep while Irons isn't even afforded an opportunity to chew scenery.

The plot makes little sense and there's no effort on the part of the script to tether the historical mumbo jumbo to a reality that non-game players can understand.

Kurzel delivers the required big budget spectacle and neatly sets up further instalments, but if this opening salvo is a signal of intent, it's game over already for Callum and his kin.

Also released...

CRASH & BURN **(15, 86 mins)**

DURING the 1980s, Dundalk-born racing car driver and self-confessed bad boy Tommy Byrne was frequently on the winner's podium in the Formula Ford and Formula 3 classes, dominating his sport through his raw talent, without the benefit of the financial muscle of his rivals. Documentary filmmaker Sean O'Cualain explores the rise – and fall – of this outsider in his compelling and often candid portrait, which is narrated by the driver himself, and includes a mosaic of archive footage and news reports, which have been interwoven with animated sequences to explore how Byrne managed to burn rubber for so many years in a sport controlled at every level by the rich and privileged.

Marion Cotillard as Sophia Rikkin and Michael Fassbender as Callum Lynch and Aguilar de Nerha in Assassin's Creed

Cake Bookworm

Homegoing **by Yaa Gyasi is published in hardback by Viking, priced £16.99 (ebook £9.99)**

HOMEGOING is the impressive debut novel from 26-year-old Ghanian author Yaa Gyasi. It is written with such maturity and beauty, that it is hard to believe it is Gyasi's first published work. Looking back to her ancestry to inform the story, *Homegoing* follows the Asante and Fante tribes from the 18th century to the present day. Effia and Esi are half-sisters, born in separate villages, bound to lead extremely different lives. Effia will be married off to a white English slave trader, while Esi is sold into slavery and shipped to America. The story spans hundreds of years, as we follow the descendants of these two women, which can leave the reader feeling disconnected from each character at points as Gyasi moves chapter by chapter on to the next one. Nevertheless, it is no mean feat to span three centuries in one novel and tie up each character's stories so neatly by the close of the novel. This is an epic saga, but one that will leave you with a heavy heart.

Montpelier Parade **by Karl Geary is published in hardback by Harvill Secker, priced £12.99 (ebook £7.99)**

IRISH actor Karl Geary's debut novel is a bittersweet love story between Sonny, schoolboy and butchers shop assistant, and the enigmatic Vera, a much older woman who resides in the eponymous Montpelier Parade. Set in Dublin in an unspecified era, Geary's depiction of his home-town is so visceral you can almost feel the dreich air seeping into your bones as you read. Geary's acute observations perfectly capture the essence of boyhood bewilderment and bravado. This is an unusually vivid novel that presents life how it is, rather than how Hollywood scriptwriters might like it to be.

Swallowing Mercury **by Wioletta Greg is published in hardback by Portobello Books, priced £12.99**

THIS novella, set in Poland in the 1980s, follows Wiola as she moves from childhood to adulthood. The country is still under communist rule and folklore, religion and superstition still play a big part in people's lives. She is part of a close-knit agricultural community where her father has a sideline in taxidermy and her mother struggles to make ends meet. Wioletta Greg paints an evocative, yet dream-like picture of a Poland that is at once familiar, but distant. It's a story of contradictions and contrasts – the Solidarity movement is threatening to overthrow the government; Wiola is desperate to be treated as an adult, but is still very much a child. Swallowing Mercury is both magical and sinister, and, like Wiola, completely captivating.

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Events

THURSDAY

Cowley Table Tennis – Over 55s: Temple Cowley United Reformed Church, Oxford Road, Cowley. Drop-in, social table tennis for people of all standards aged 55+. 9.45am. £2 per hour or £3 full session. 01865 395210.
Film: Abingdon Health and Wellbeing Centre, Audlett Drive, Abingdon. *Grandma,* 75 mins, USA, 2015, Cert 15. Grandma sees Lily Tomlin in top acerbic form. 7.45pm. £6. 01235 521976.
Grove RFC Girls' Rugby: Grove RFC, Recreation Lane, Grove. Contact rugby union for girls aged 11-18 in three age groups. 7pm. Annual membership £85 after three free sessions. 07970 292322.
Slimming World: Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot. 5pm and 7pm. 07508 202462.

FRIDAY

Crochet for beginners: Hobbycraft, Lamarsh Road, Oxford. 5pm. £5. 01865 364881.
Witney Bytomic Taekwondo Classes: Wood Green School, Woodstock Road, Witney. 7pm. Monthly fees apply. 01844 281888.

SATURDAY

Comics Club with Neill Cameron: The Story Museum, 42 Pembroke Street, Oxford. Develop comic-making skills and share ideas with like-minded enthusiasts. 11am. £7 per monthly session, or six sessions for £30. 01865790050.
National Art and Design Saturday Club: Banbury and Bicester College, Broughton Road, Oxford. For ages 14-16. 10am. 0808 168 6626.
Oxford Wine Tasting Experience Day – 'World of Wine': Old Bank Hotel, 4 High Street, Oxford. Tasting, learning and talking about wine including a three-course food and wine-matching lunch. 10.30am. £89. 0845 680 8367.
Ramblers walk: Castle car park, Cowley. Ten-mile walk via Lye Valley and Oxford University Parks. Pub/picnic stop. 10am. 01865 874300.
Slimming World: Preston Road Community Centre, Midget Close, off Preston Road, Abingdon. 9.30am. £10 membership and £4.95 each week after. 07508 202462.
Winter Fruit Tree Pruning: Earth Trust, Little Wittenham. Learn all aspects of pruning dormant trees with expert Andy Howard. 9.30am. £50. 01865 407792.

SUNDAY

Bytomic Taekwondo Classes: Brookside Primary School, Bucknell Road, Bicester. 5pm. 01844 281 888.
Crochet for beginners: Hobbycraft, Lamarsh Road, Oxford. 3pm. £5. 01865 364881.
Second Lease Walks: Woodford Way Car Park, Woodford Way, Witney. Seven-mile route in the Woodstock area. 9.30am. Free. 01993 774500.
Sunday Drop-in – Forest School Fun: Earth Trust, Little Wittenham. 10am. £4 suggested donation. 01865 407792.

MONDAY

Bingo: The Seacourt Bridge, West Way, Botley. 2pm. £3. 01865 243636.
Lenny's Monday Group: St Leonard's Church, Middleton Road, Banbury. 11.30am seated exercises to maintain joint flexibility and muscle strength, taught by qualified instructor. 12.30pm time to socialise over soup and a roll. 1.15-2pm discussion group, each week a different topic, chosen by the group topics listed on church website www.saintleonard.org Suggested donation £5. 01295 271008.
Masons Apron Northwest Morris: Recreation Hall, Main Street, Long Hanborough. Masons Apron Ladies Northwest Morris winter practice season. 8.15pm. £5 annual fee plus £2 per week. 01993 200717.
Slimming World: Abingdon Rugby Club, Lambrick Way, Abingdon. 7.30pm. £10 membership and £4.95 each week after. 07508 202642.
Women's Self Defence and Fitness Class: The Pavilion, Roosevelt Road, Long Hanborough. Ages from 13 upwards. 8pm. £5. 07834 022463.
Yoga Class: The Clifton Centre, Ashdene Road, Bicester. 9.30am. 07917 453224.

TUESDAY

A fuel for the future – biomethane: Ship Street Centre, Jesus College, Ship Street, Oxford. Presented by Oxford Civic Society. The challenges of climate change have produced a revolution in how we produce energy. Dr Thomas Bradshaw from Harwell explains how space industry technology is enabling gas produced from mown grass and farm waste to be stored and transported for use as domestic and vehicle fuel. 7.30pm. Free. 07798 625740.
Natural History Talk: The Community Centre, New Road, Woodstock. Dr Alan Larkman, *Old Fashioned Farming for Wildlife: City Farm, Eynsham*. For the Woodstock Natural History Society. 7.30pm. Visitors £2. 01993 812004.
Ramblers walk: South side of the green, Warborough. Leisurely four-mile walk to the rivers Thame and Thames. Pub stop at the end. 10am. 01844 215624.
Slimming World: Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot. 9.30am, 11.30am, 5pm and 7pm. £10 membership and then £4.95 a week. 07788 132541.
Slimming World: Dalton Barracks Community Centre, Cholswell Road, Abingdon-on-Thames. 5.30pm. 07568 092964.
The Big Lunchtime Sing: Museum of Oxford, Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford. Fun singing sessions for everyone. 12.30pm. £5 per session. 01865 252334.
Yoga Class: The Clifton Centre, Ashdene Road, Bicester. 6.15pm. 07917 453224.
Yoga for those who think they can't do yoga: Methodist Church, West Street, Chipping Norton. 7.30pm. £12. 01993 831032.

WEDNESDAY

Cotswold Decorative & Fine Arts Society: Bradwell Village Hall, Bradwell Village, Burford. A lecture, entitled *Marc Chagall's Poetic Vision*, by Frank Woodgate. 10.15am. Suggested donation £10.
Cowley Table Tennis – Open to All: Temple Cowley United Reformed Church, Oxford Road, Cowley. Drop-in, social table tennis for people of all standards. 8pm. £2 per hour or £3 full session, under-16s £1. 01865 395210.
Crochet for beginners: Hobbycraft, Lamarsh Road, Oxford. 5pm. £5. 01865 364881.
Grove RFC Ladies Rugby: Grove RFC, Recreation Lane, Grove. 70pm. Annual membership £70 after three free sessions. 07970292322.
Harwell WI: Harwell New Orchard Village Hall, Westfield Road, Harwell. An evening of music and song, 'Sing Showstoppers' with Jenni Matthews. 7.30pm. Free. 01235 835649.
Oxford Ornithological Society Indoor Meeting: Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington. *The Race to Extinction? Wood Warblers in the New Forest*. With Tony Davis. 7.45pm. Free.
Oxfordshire Railway Society: Seacourt Day Centre, Seacourt Road, Botley. *Fifty Years a Railwayman*. An illustrated talk by Adrian Shooter, former Chiltern Railways chairman. 7.30pm. £3.
Phoenix Book Club: The Story Museum, 42 Pembroke Street, Oxford. Check out the titles handpicked for the Phoenix Comic Book Club then share your ideas with fellow comic fans. 4pm. £3 including drink and a biscuit. 01865 790050.
SAE Oxford Creative Media Courses Open Evening: SAE Oxford, Littlemore Park, Armstrong Road, Oxford. Find out about courses in animation, audio, film, games, music business and web development. 5-7.30pm. Free.
Slimming World: St Michael's School, The Causeway, Steventon. 5.30pm and 7.30pm. 07704 633840.
Slimming World: Steventon Village Hall, The Green, Steventon. 9.30am. 07704 633840.
Snowdrop Teas Open Days: Braziers Park, Ipsden, Wallingford. Snowdrop walk around the estate, tearoom with cakes and teas, House and Estate tours. 10am-4pm. Free.
Social Meet-Up Group for Hard of Hearing Folk: Oxford Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre, 10 Littlegate Street, St Ebbe's, Oxford. Gentle chatter, Tri-Ominos (like Dominos – but triangular), guest speakers, bingo, age group 60+. 2-5pm. Free.
Speedwell Lecture: Green Templeton College, Woodstock Road, Oxford. Professor Glenn Gibson, *What Can Diet Do For Your Gut Bugs?* 7.30pm. £5. Students free. 01865 552688.
The Water Gypsy – How A Thames Fisher Girl Married a Viscount.: The Oxfordshire Museum, Park Street, Woodstock. With Julie Ann Godson. 7.30pm. Free to members, £2 guests.
Witney Bytomic Taekwondo Classes: Wood Green School, Woodstock Road, Witney. 7pm. Monthly fees apply. 01844 281888.

To get an event of any kind listed here, enter the details into our easy-to-use online database at thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/events
Please add your event no later than ten days before the day of publication.

Music

THURSDAY

Jude The Obscure, 54 Walton Street, Oxford: Acoustic Thursdays. Local acts and live jams. 8.30-10.30pm. Free.

FRIDAY

General Foods Club, Spiceball Park, Banbury: Jason Pegg. Covers. 8.30pm. 01295 252852.
St Helen's Church, West St Helen Street, Abingdon: Choral Concert. St Peter's Lutheran College, Chorale, Brisbane, Queensland. Retiring Collection for St Helen's Church. 7pm. 01235 520144.
The White House, Abingdon Road, Oxford: Oxford Folk Club open night. £2. 8.30pm. 01865 768128.
Donnington Community Centre, Freelands Road, Iffley: Moontower, Song And Supper Rooms, Mark Atherton, Beard Of Destiny. Local acoustic acts plus acoustic jam session. 6pm-9pm. Free.
The Wheatsheaf, 129 High Street, Oxford: NeverInd, The Shapes, Moon Leopard. 8pm. £5.

SATURDAY

The Brewery Tap, 40 Ock Street, Abingdon-on-Thames: Mudslide Morris & the Revelators. Free. 9pm. 01235 521655.
James Street Tavern, 47-48 James Street, Oxford: Jerry Lunn, Sir Bald, Johnny Louche. 8pm. Free.
Cricketers Arms, 102 Temple Road, Cowley: Pete Fryer Band. Local blues-rock legend. 9pm. Free.
The Wheatsheaf, 129 High Street, Oxford: Rats Eat Rats, Wolfs, Social Discharge, Compulsory Primal Response. Grunge, rock & punk. 7.45pm. £5 (adv), £6 (otd).

SUNDAY

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Papercut, Twisted State Of Mind, Shire, Reaper, Hostile Takeover. First heat of rock and metal battle of the bands. 6pm-11pm. £5.
The Nag's Head, The Bridge, Abingdon: Afternoon jazz. 5-7pm. Free.
The Oxford Wine Cafe, South Parade, Summertown: Jazz with Kim Cypher (sax/vocals, piano, bass & drums). 6.30-9pm. Free.

MONDAY

Jude The Obscure, 54 Walton Street, Oxford: Acoustic Thursdays. Local acts and live jams. 8.30-10.30pm. Free.

TUESDAY

James Street Tavern, 47-48 James Street, Oxford: Open mic night. 8.30pm. Free.

THURSDAY

Burton Taylor Studio, Gloucester Street, Oxford: Oxford Jazz Masters Series. George Haslam saxophone, clarinet, tarogato, Richard Leigh Harris piano and Steve Kershaw double bass. With special guest Simple Harmonic Motion playing original instrumental music in the new age/ contemporary classical genre. £10/£8. 8pm. 01865 305305.

Theatre

OXFORD

Burton Taylor Studio, Beaumont Street, Oxford: Jan 6, *Pilgrim.* Dance. 7.30pm. £10. Jan 7, *I Stop to Understand.* 7.30pm. £10. Jan 9, *To She Or Not To She.* Semi-autobiographical comedy solo show by Emma Bentley. 7.30pm. £10. Jan 10-11, *Heartbeats and Algorithms.* 7.30pm. £10. 01865 305305.
Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford: Until Jan 8, *Cinderella*. Various times and prices. Jan 12, *An Evening with Pam Ayres.* 7.30pm. £24. 01865 305305.
New Theatre, George Street, Oxford: Jan 5-7, *La Cage Aux Folles*. 7.30pm. £17.90 - £50.40 plus £4 transaction fee. Jan 9-14, *The Commitments.*7.30pm. £17.90-£55.40 plus £2.85 transaction fee. 0844 871 7615.
The North Wall Arts Centre, South Parade, Summertown: Until Jan 7, *Snow White and Other Tales from the Brothers Grimm.* Creation Theatre. 2pm. £13.50-£32. 01865 766266.
The Story Museum, 42 Pembroke Street, Oxford: Until Jan 8, *Three Bears.* A festive treat for children aged three plus and their families. Various times. Tickets from £5. 01865 790050.

COUNTY

Banbury Town Hall, Bridge Street, Banbury: Jan 6-15, *Treasure Island.* Cherwell Theatre Company.7.30pm. Adults £10, concessions £8, family £32.
Chipping Norton Theatre, Spring Street, Chipping Norton: Until Jan 8, *Robinson Crusoe.* Panto. Various times and prices. 01608 642350.

Exhibitions

OXFORD

Christ Church Picture Gallery, Entrance via Oriel Square, Oxford: Until Jan 30, *Drawing in Red.* 10.30am. £4/£2 concessions; Oxford University members free. Until Feb 20, *Forgotten Faces: Portraits from our Storeroom*. 10.30am. 01865 276172.
The Jam Factory, Hollybush Row, Oxford: Until Jan 15, *Oxford Gothic*. 9am. Free. 01865 244613.
John Radcliffe Hospital, Main Corridor, Level 2, Oxford: Until Jan 21, *Twelfth Night*. Free. Calligraphy exhibition by Oxford Scribes 01865 714714.
Link Gallery @ John Radcliffe Hospital, Headington, Headley Way, Oxford: Until Feb 28, *Rivers of Life: Photographs by Rob Farrands*. Free. 07867 900746.
Museum of Oxford, Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford: Until Jan 7, *Local Arts Showcase.* 10am. Free. Until Jan 7, *JoeDaisy and the Hare Exhibition*. 10am. Free. Until Jan 14, *30 years of the Oxford-Leon Link*. 10am. Free. 01865 252334.
Museum of Natural History, Parks Road, Oxford: Until Jan 29, *Artweeks Arctic*. Arctic-inspired glasswork, paintings, photography, textiles and ceramics from a range of Oxfordshire Artweeks artists.
10am-5pm. Free.
Museum of the History of Science, Old Ashmolean Building, Broad Street, Oxford: *Back from the Dead: Demystifying Antibiotics*
The miraculous and precarious nature of antibiotics from the 1940s to the present day – 75th anniversary of the first human penicillin trials.
12-5pm. Free.
Weston Library, Broad Street, Oxford: Until Feb 17, *Bodleian Treasures: 24 Pairs*. An exhibition displaying a selection of the Bodleian Library's most magnificent items including Tolkien's illustrations from *The Hobbit*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the *Bay Psalm Book*, the 'most expensive' printed book in the world and the venerated *Shikshapatri*. 10am-5pm. Free.
The North Wall Arts Centre, South Parade, Oxford: Until Jan 7, *Out of Line: Invitation to Voyage*. 10am. Dec 6-Jan 7, *Flint*. 10am. 01865 319450.
The Turrill Sculpture Garden, Through Summertown Library, South Parade, Summertown: Until Feb 25, Turrill Sculpture Garden Christmas/Winter Exhibition. 9.30am. Free. 01865 515584.

COUNTY

Bantam Lodge, Church End, South Leigh: Jan 9-29, Exhibition: Andrew Freidin and Rose-Marie Caldecott. 12pm. Free.
Bohun Gallery, 15 Reading Road, Henley on Thames: Until Jan 28, *Paper Arabesque*. 10am. Until Jan 28, Ceramics by Prue Piper. 10am. 01491 576228.
Chipping Norton Theatre Gallery, Spring Street, Chipping Norton: Until Jan 10, *Homecoming*. 10am. Free. 07885 079902.
Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington: Jan 7-8, ScoutRail Model Rail Show. 10am. Adults £3.50, concessions £2.50, children £1.50.
Junction Art Gallery, 43 Oxford Street, Woodstock: Until Jan 14, Winter Exhibition. 10am. Free. 01993 358707.

CakeSport

banburycake.co.uk/sport

Mark Bell (right) struck in the third minute of stoppage time

Bell strikes late to trip up leaders

'Bully-boy' Leamington beaten by Puritans

MARK Bell scored a dramatic stoppage-time winner as Banbury United beat leaders Leamington 1-0 in front of a bumper crowd at The Banbury Plant Hire Community Stadium.

The substitute struck with virtually the last kick to extend the Puritans' unbeaten run to five games in the Evo-Stik Southern League Premier Division.

It will have been a sweet result for boss Mike Ford, who viewed the game as a clash of styles.

In the build-up to the game, he said: "We like to play right out from the back, whereas they just kick it as far as they can.

Banbury United	**1**
Leamington	**0**

"They're very physical and very direct and they use bully-boy tactics, like the Wimbledon of old.

"If we can get the result on Monday, football will be the winner."

Playing in front of a crowd of 734, Banbury's Callum White saw his effort cleared off the line.

Courtney Baker-Richardson twice went close for the visitors after the break, heading straight at goalkeeper Jack Harding, before hitting a post.

The hosts had chances – Martin Asiedu Ofosu had a shot blocked, while Zac McEachran fired over.

Leamington pushed for a winner and Andy Gunn blocked a Ryan Rowe shot, before Harding saved from Richard Taundry.

But Banbury won it in the third minute of stoppage time when Bell scored from close range.

Banbury Utd: Harding, Westbrook, Gunn, Nash, Carnell, Self (Odhiambo 66), White, McDonagh (Browne 84), Ofosu (Bell 73), McEachran, Martin. Subs not used: Humphreys, Blackstock.

Attendance: 734.

LATEST TABLE

EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leamington	27	17	6	4	47	16	57
Hitchin Tn	28	16	7	5	48	26	55
Slough Tn	25	16	4	5	46	26	52
Chippenham Tn	26	14	8	4	56	36	50
Merthyr Tn	27	13	10	4	52	23	49
Frome Tn	28	13	8	7	47	40	47
Banbury Utd	**26**	**13**	**5**	**8**	**42**	**23**	**44**
Chesham Utd	23	12	6	5	44	22	42
Redditch Utd	28	12	6	10	40	41	42
Kettering Tn	27	11	7	9	49	37	40
Dunstable Tn	27	12	3	12	31	33	39
Biggleswade Tn	26	9	9	8	46	37	36
King's Lynn Tn	24	8	10	6	34	34	34
St Ives Tn	27	9	7	11	30	44	34
Stratford Tn	27	7	12	8	41	42	33
Dorchester Tn	28	8	8	12	36	46	32
Basingstoke Tn	27	9	5	13	31	41	32
Weymouth	23	7	9	7	33	28	30
Kings Langley	27	7	7	13	40	49	28
Cirencester Tn	29	6	6	17	34	67	24
St Neots Tn	26	6	4	16	34	63	22
Hayes & Yeading	26	5	6	15	26	51	21
Cambridge City	27	4	7	16	26	48	19
Cinderford Tn	27	3	2	22	28	68	11

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ARIES Mar 21-Apr 19

Things you couldn't enjoy this time last month, you can now embrace with open eyes and an open heart. You've done a lot of growing up over the last two weeks and I think you'll find the reaction you get from close ones alone will be proof that you made the right choices my friend, although they were not easy ones. Ring now so I can explain why I'm so very proud of you.

0906 585 4360

TAURUS Apr 20-May 20

Stop looking backwards and start focusing on all that is in front of you in 2017. You will soon see that you have every reason to get excited about the future, rather than dreading it. An arrogant character in your circle is about to take a step back from your life, much to your satisfaction. New faces in the family change things for the better. Ring now so I can predict your future for you.

0906 585 4361

GEMINI May 21-Jun 20

The opportunities this month are all you wanted, plus more. Get ready for some really exciting times. Romance in particular is well starred. You start to see with ease, from Tuesday, who is good for you and who has been dragging you down. News of a birth or pregnancy brings much excitement. Ring now so I can tell you why 2017 is such a life changing time for you.

0906 585 4362

CANCER Jun 21-Jul 22

Rather than feeling threatened by any new faces who have entered the life of your close ones, why don't you try getting to know them on your level and on your terms Cancer? You'll soon discover that you have much more in common than you thought possible. The written word can both earn and lose you money, so be careful. Ring now so I can explain why it's worth wearing your heart on your sleeve.

0906 585 4363

LEO Jul 23-Aug 22

I can see that both you and your close ones have said some things you regret, but taking them back is proving much harder than you originally thought it would be. Recognise the fact you are the master of your own destiny. Be a leader, not a follower my friend. Remember what sign you are and just how much you are capable of. Ring now so I can tell you how memorable this year will be.

0906 585 4364

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Some exciting changes are approaching in your career, which can help to make your working life a better place to be. By the end of this month, the bad influence who made for such a stressful end to 2016 will be gone. Look out for new attractions in love. Although they may initially seem complex, they are actually more straightforward than you'd dreamed. Ring now so I can explain in full.

0906 585 4365

LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

Pay attention to detail over the coming days Libra, as those with the power are watching all you say and do more closely than you think. Fun times with new faces make your life a better place to be. You no longer worry about what might go wrong, but you work on what can and will go right. Wear red for new opportunities. Ring now so I can tell you how empowered your chart is.

0906 585 4366

SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

A financial issue which was beginning to get out of hand is given a boost by someone you didn't even know was on your side. Slow your pace in new relationships though, or you will miss out on building the base which I know is so important to your sign. Your ruling planet Mars helps you make sense of a betrayal from Christmas and New Year. Ring now. I have so much to tell you.

0906 585 4367

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

I know you have not had an easy time with your career of late, but that has a lot to do with the way you have been making decisions based on other people's advice. Do what you actually feel is right. Your element of fire helps you fight back in business mid-week as you work out what needs to be done to get to the top of your game. Ring now so I can tell you who's really on your side.

0906 585 4368

CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

Plans you were about to give up on are given a helping hand by those you don't know that well. What others see in you this week Capricorn is the ability you have to run with an idea and to make sense of what others cannot. Foreign names and links are all lucky and take your life to a better place. Ring now so I can give you a glimpse of what your future will hold.

0906 585 4369

AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

Your element of air is pushing you to reveal secrets which are not actually yours to share. Careful how much you reveal my friend, as you could be opening up Pandora's box if you are not careful. Know how far is too far to go and try to make a list of what is and should be your priority. Geminis link to a better social life which is slowly evolving. Ring now so I can show you what your destiny holds.

0906 585 4370

PISCES Feb 19-Mar 20

There is a jealous side to your nature which has been exposed. It's making it hard for you to feel confident in your plans. Luckily for you, those who know you well are ready, willing and able to give you the assurance you need. You are on the right path. Fellow Pisces prove successful allies in business and make it possible for you to reach for your dreams. Ring now for details.

0906 585 4371

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7 EDUCATION
8 PUBLIC NOTICES
9 RECRUITMENT
10 MOTORS
11 PROPERTY

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Co-op to create 1,500 jobs

THE Co-operative Group has big plans for 2017, with 100 new stores set to open across the country – creating 1,500 jobs.

Co-op will invest £70m in the new shops, which will be spread throughout the UK in London, South East England, Yorkshire and Scotland.

If they keep to schedule the Co-op will have opened five stores in London by the end of March. Other new stores will open in Swansea, Kings Bromley in Staffordshire, Beverley in East Yorkshire, Northfields in East Lothian and Sheffield.

The business opened a similar number of stores in 2016.

The company is entering the last phase of a three-year turnaround programme after a period of disorder mostly to do with Co-op banking.

Stuart Hookins, property portfolio and development director at the Co-op, said: "While other retailers are scaling back their expansion plans, the Co-op continues to open new convenience stores. We opened 100 stores in 2016, and we plan to open hundreds more new stores over the next few years.

"The Co-op has a clear food strategy, which is to deliver a great and convenient shopping experience for millions of members and customers on a daily basis."

"As part of this strategy our acquisitions programme is fundamental to its success, and we are actively seeking new opportunities. We are the fastest growing non-discounter and most frequently visited. Our new stores will ensure even more shoppers can visit the Co-op."

Business Secretary Greg Clark said: "The Co-op's decision is fantastic news for our retail sector and a further vote of confidence in the UK economy. This government is determined to create an economy that works for all, which is why our upcoming industrial strategy will focus on creating an environment where businesses big and small can thrive."

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Local Council management opportunity

PARISH CLERK

(Full time, Salary range £37,858 - £41,551 + 1% wef 01.04.17)

Kidlington Parish Council is one of the largest parishes in England taking care of local council matters just north of Oxford City, serving a population of 13,000, managing a budget of £793,000 and assets of £2M. We are looking for a highly motivated individual with an interest in the local community to become our next Parish Clerk upon the planned retirement of our existing Clerk in April 2017.

The role involves responsibility for the effective management of the council's business which include allotments, cemeteries, recreation grounds/open spaces, venue hire, annual events. The Clerk is responsible for managing the meeting cycle for the council, advising councillors on law and procedure, as well as supervision of a team of 14.

We are seeking someone who has previous experience of dealing with the public, managing a team, leading others, running projects and managing efficient administrative practices. Good computer skills are important and previous experience of the local council sector is an advantage. Candidates will be expected to hold CiLCA (or equivalent)or to commit to obtaining a local council management qualification within the next financial year. Training will be provided.

The job will be based at Exeter Hall, Kidlington, Oxfordshire OX5 1AB and will require some evening working.

This permanent role is for 37 hours per week and is paid on the NJC scale of SCP43-47. A workplace pension is provided.

An application pack and supporting information are available from the Clerk, e-mail **clerk@kidlington-pc.gov.uk** or phone **01865 372143**

The closing date for applications is Friday 20th January 2017. Interviews will be held week commencing 30th January 2017.

Kidlington Parish Council is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. Please advise us if you need any reasonable adjustments for any part of the recruitment process

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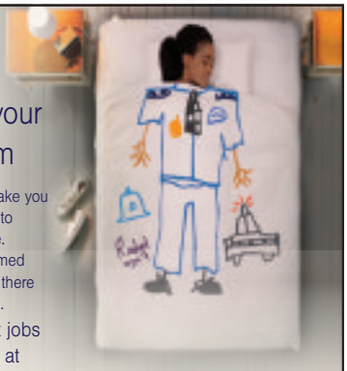

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